

Health Impacts Subgroup—Meeting One Minutes

August 19, 2020

9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Meeting Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDs6qrqIA_g

Meeting Attendees:

Annette Kelley (Board of Pharmacy), on behalf of Caroline Juran
Assistant Secretary Catie Finley, on behalf of Secretary Daniel Carey
Deputy Secretary Brad Copenhaver, on behalf of Secretary Bettina Ring
Heather Martinson (Co-chair for Prevention Council VASCB), on behalf of Jennifer Faison
Assistant Secretary Heidi Hertz (*as a note taker*)
James Hutchings (Department of Forensic Science)
Jenn Michelle Pedini (Virginia NORML)
Katie Crumble (VA ABC), on behalf of Travis Hill
Ngiste Abebe (Columbia Care)
Nour Alamiri (Chair of Community Coalitions of VA)
Dr. Sam Caughron (Charlottesville Wellness Center Family Practice)

Deputy Secretary Brad Copenhaver, serving on behalf of Secretary Bettina Ring, began the meeting at 9:00 AM.

The first order of business was for the group to select leaders of the subgroup.

Subgroup Co-chairs: Samuel Caughron, Nour Alamiri

Roll Call Vote: 8 votes yes, 0 votes no (Unanimous for co-chairs)

Group Discussion and Policy Questions:

Brad reminded the subgroup of the relevant part of the work group's charge:
"What are the health impacts of marijuana use or legalizing adult-use marijuana in VA?"
Physical and Mental health impacts- positive, negative, neutral and from a public health perspective

The following is a summary of the discussion during the meeting regarding potential topics and policy questions that the members brought up.

- Need understanding of biochemistry and physiology of the products (400 or more) all with different properties.
- Identify health issues where marijuana has been useful. Review other states (ex. Colorado, Massachusetts) to get guidance on this.
- Prevention and education for youth- How do we have evidence-based drug education for youth? Preventing use by youth for reasons other than medically prescribed. Review data regarding adult use and impact on use by youth including initiating use. Does increased access with adult-use impact youth use? Prevent high risk youth behavior of all substances. Review risk factors for youth access (ex. Not at cannabis retailer, more likely

when adult in the home has the products). For both alcohol and tobacco, a lot of research conducted on youth prevention. Previous reports on substance use by youth- VFHY, Commission on Youth.

- Educate parents- how to store products in the home, child-proof packaging, 20% of youth using alcohol is getting it from an adult who has purchased it for them.
- Resources needed for community, school, and law enforcement programming
- Impact on colleges and universities- academic performance, health services, community impact, law enforcement
- Education, prevention around combined use of marijuana and other products (ex. Prescribed drugs, alcohol, etc) - Review previous information specifically for seniors in combined use of medications and cannabis products.
- Reducing criminalization of use for specific populations- Education to state agencies, drug court, others. Opioid use reduction with adult use legalization.
- Addiction- Review, discuss cannabis use disorder (research indicates 12%)
- Regulating advertising- prohibiting advertising to children
- Consider prevention and education with respect to impairment (ex. Similar to drunk driving prevention education) to stop potential consequences.
- Focus on evidence-based data on presence of health effects. Review research done around the world.
- Cannabis has been highly studied. Emerging clinical data- https://norml.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf_files/NORML_Clinical_Applications_for_Cannabis_and_Cannabinoids.pdf
- Additional education needs- Law enforcement. Employers including reviewing workplace policies, employee screening, workplace safety.
- Impairment- Data points to marijuana does not have the same types of effects as alcohol. American College of Occupational and Environmental medicine has looked into this. Review marijuana taskforce report- themarijuanareport.org.
- Impaired driving- research is dated and may continue to be minimal going forward. Studies on the impact on cannabis use and highway safety, JLARC study will look at National Highway Traffic Safety Administration research findings
- Testing- Review tools to determine impairment (ex. Alert meter) that have been used by law enforcement and employers.
- Resource links- Smart Approaches to Marijuana-<https://learnaboutsam.org/toolkit/>
- Physiology of cannabis- description of metabolites to present to the legislature? This legislature has seen this information since 2015 and are educated on this topic particularly around medical cannabis
- Impacts of surrounding states and federal law- interstate transport, allowable products in one state vs another
- Mental health- Review impact of cannabis use on brain and mental health, risk for depression anxiety, suicide, psychotic episodes. How will this impact individuals served by DBHDS, (ex. Increase need for services)? Review use of products to treat PTSD?
- Current VA status- Cannabis is currently sold in VA but is untaxed, untracked, unregulated

- Defining adult use age- 21 years. Selected based on alcohol. Prevention strategies during brain development years 21 – 25 years
- Criminalizing use- impact on youth use, currently in VA juvenile cannabis possession is considered delinquency
- Social impact- Need to consider access and availability of products
- Synthetics- lost popularity in VA, products not allowed in VA
- Role of legalization compared to current status in VA- how do we increase safety through evidence-based approach? “behind the counter” vs “on the streets”. Role of education to prevent new users. Review/list health issues and impact of cannabis use. Review/list negative health impacts, issues, and complications of marijuana use.
- Specific populations- Fastest growing segment of users are seniors. Impacts of use during pregnancy and fetal development (DSS “Handle with Care”). Review studies- Surgeon General report, HHS advisory.
- Strategies to educate consumers- Importance of product labeling, dosage, instructions for use
- Consumer safety standards for medical cannabis- VA has one of the most stringent guidelines/regulations for medical cannabis program including 3rd party testing, would like these carried over to adult-use
- Legally available products- listing legal pharmaceutical products
- Public health impacts of prohibition- recognizing previous/current violence, illegal markets, etc. Review strategies for equitable legalization and reinvestment in communities with disproportionate impact under current prohibition in place in VA. Impact to communities of color. Law enforcement role regulating use and distribution. Police reform related to adult use cannabis. Marcus Alerts as part of response efforts.
- Terminology- prevention avoids use of “medical marijuana”. “medical cannabis” is a commonly used term. In VA “medical cannabis” or “cannabis oil” used. “Marijuana” referred to in criminal code.

Group Discussion of Stakeholder and Subject Matter Expert Engagement:

- Engaging the public: listening sessions
- Engaging subject matter experts:
- Natalie H, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.
- Dr. Dustin Sulak and Dr. Bonni Goldstein, clinicians
- Other states perspectives on health impacts- DBHDS, Secretary Moran
- Collegiate recovery programs- VCU Rams in Recovery
- Marcus Alert- crisis recovery models
- OAG Cannabis Summit video recordings- <https://livestream.com/agalliance/vcs/videos/199786741>
- Substance Use Services Council
- Physicians from Massachusetts and Rhode Island
- Doctors for Cannabis Regulation, Clinician and Public Health perspective
- Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) <https://learnaboutsam.org/>
- Need balanced approach to presentations, sharing both “pros” and “cons” recognizing current VA baseline

- Potential topics: substance use/abuse (DBHDS as a resource), strategies from other states, clinician perspective

Brad Copenhaver: Told the group to look out for an email with more information about setting the next meeting date. We are going to try to avoid meeting during the Special Session if possible.

Public Comment:

- One person was registered for public comment but not on the meeting call.
- Chris Leyen - Office of Senator Adam Ebbin (1.) Emphasis on succinct presentation of findings between status quo and a switch to a legal regulated market in regards to health impacts.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 AM

Chat Conversations during the meeting:

from Jenn Michelle Pedini to all panelists: 9:15 AM

https://norml.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf_files/NORML_Clinical_Applications_for_Cannabis_and_Cannabinoids.pdf

from Jenn Michelle Pedini to all panelists: 9:17 AM

<https://norml.org/marijuana/fact-sheets/marijuana-regulation-and-teen-use-rates/>

from Heather Martinsen to all panelists: 9:26 AM

Smart Approaches to Marijuana-<https://learnaboutsam.org/toolkit/>

from Heather Martinsen to all panelists: 9:27 AM

oops-<https://learnaboutsam.org/toolkit/>

from Heather Martinsen to all panelists: 9:28 AM

The Marijuana Report - themarijuanareport.org

from Heather Martinsen to all panelists: 9:28 AM

The Rocky Mountain HIDTA Report 2019

From Jenn Michelle Pedini to all panelists: 9:30 AM

<https://norml.org/marijuana/fact-sheets/marijuana-regulation-and-teen-use-rates/>

from Jenn Michelle Pedini to all panelists: 9:38 AM

<https://norml.org/marijuana/fact-sheets/marijuana-exposure-and-cognitive-performance/>

from Jenn Michelle Pedini to all panelists: 9:39 AM

<https://norml.org/marijuana/fact-sheets/societal-impacts-of-cannabis-dispensaries-retailers/>

from Chris Leyen to all panelists: 9:39 AM

Decriminalization Legislation: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB2>

Approved by Health Impacts Subgroup on September 14, 2020

from Jenn Michelle Pedini to all panelists: 10:06 AM

<https://norml.org/marijuana/fact-sheets/maternal-marijuana-use-and-childhood-outcomes/>

from Jenn Michelle Pedini to all panelists: 10:20 AM

Additional white papers highlighting the relevant peer-reviewed science pertaining to the health and societal impacts of cannabis use, enforcement, and regulation are available at

<https://norml.org/marijuana/fact-sheets>